

Organizational Compassion as a Complex Social Relational Process

A thesis submitted by

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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

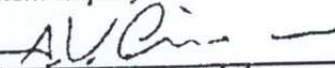
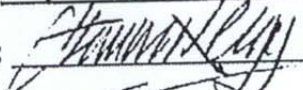


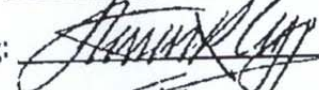

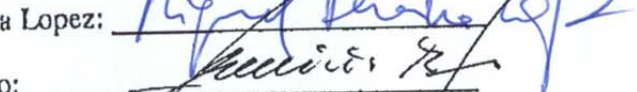
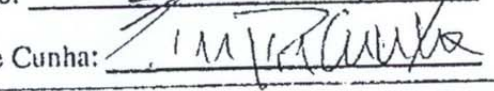
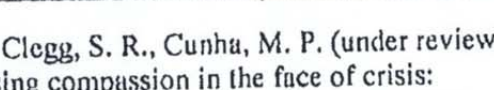

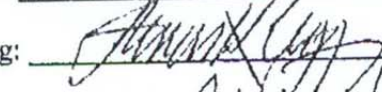
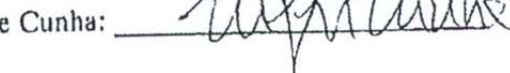
I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student

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STATEMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PAPERS CONTAINED IN THE THESIS

The following list summarises Ace Simpson's particular contributions to the joint papers in this thesis.

Paper	Ace Simpson's Contribution
Simpson, A., Clegg, S. & Pitsis, T. (under review). I used to care but things have changed: A genealogy of compassion in organizations. <i>Journal of Management Inquiry</i> .	Overall 88% Conceptualisation 95% Analysis 95% Writing 75%
Ace Simpson: <u></u>	
Stewart Clegg: <u></u>	
Tyrone Pitsis: <u></u>	
Simpson, A., Clegg, S., Pitsis, T., Lopez, M.P., Rego, A., Cunha, M. P. (under review). Practicing compassion in organizations: The ideal and the real. <i>Organization</i> .	Overall 75% Conceptualisation 80% Analysis 70% Writing 75%
Ace Simpson: <u></u>	
Stewart Clegg: <u></u>	
Tyrone Pitsis: <u></u>	
Miguel Pereira Lopez: <u></u>	
Armenio Rego: <u></u>	
Miguel Pina e Cunha: <u></u>	
Simpson, A., Clegg, S. R., Cunha, M. P. (under review). Expressing compassion in the face of crisis: Organizational practices in the aftermath of the Brisbane floods of 2011. <i>Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management</i> .	Overall 85% Conceptualisation 80% Data collection 100% Analysis 80% Writing 80%
Ace Simpson: <u></u>	
Stewart Clegg: <u></u>	
Miguel Pina e Cunha: <u></u>	

Simpson, A., e Cunha, M. P., Clegg, S. R. (under review). The sociomateriality of compassion: Lessons from a crisis. *Journal of Business Ethics*.

Ace Simpson: — A.V.C. —

Miguel Pina e Cunha: Miguel Pina e Cunha

Stewart Clegg: Stewart Clegg

Overall 84%
Conceptualisation 80%
Data collection 100%
Analysis 75%
Writing 80%

Simpson, A., Clegg, S. & Pitsis, T. (under 3rd review). The dynamics of compassion: A framework for compassionate decision making. *Journal of Business Ethics*.

Ace Simpson: — A.V.C. —

Stewart Clegg: Stewart Clegg

Tyrone Pitsis: Tyrone Pitsis

Overall 86%
Conceptualisation 85%
Data collection 100%
Analysis 85%
Writing 75%

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Abstract

The past two decades have seen a growing acknowledgement of the significant role played by emotion in organizations, with a consequent emergence of interest in organizational compassion. The most in-depth body of research on organizational compassion has been conducted by academics associated with the fledgling Positive Organizational Scholarship community. While this literature has spurred scholarly theorising and research of compassion, a gap in this literature is its under-acknowledgement of compassion as a complex social relational process enmeshed in power dynamics. A related limitation is the lack of appropriate acknowledgement that as a social phenomenon, the outcomes of compassion relations are a mix of positivity and negativity. To the contrary, much of the literature assumes compassion to be an inherent psychological trait, or an eternal moral imperative, that leads to positive individual and collective outcomes.

I have sought to demonstrate through theoretical and empirical research that organizational compassion relations are inseparable from social relations of power. The findings of these studies have been written up as five articles submitted to organization and management journals and then collected together for submission as a dissertation by publication. Two articles are theoretical, while three present the findings of empirical research using narrative and discursive methodologies.

Narrative methods were used in two studies to analyse the same interview data collected from 25 employees from 18 organizations. The interviews concerned the support provided to them (or the lack of support) when the Brisbane CBD was evacuated in January 2011 due to the flooding of the Brisbane River. The fact that the interviewees were from different organizations allowed comparison of narratives from different organizational settings, during a time of crisis that affected the entire community. Cross comparison of these narratives provided an opportunity for deeper insight into the power dynamics of organizational compassion, in both structural and practical aspects.

In a further study, discursive analysis was applied to naturalistic data available through 278 user comments from two online news articles. The unsolicited user comments from each case provided divergent arguments indicating that legitimacy as a giver or receiver

of compassion is highly contested and is embedded within power considerations of privilege, obligation, control, and exploitation.

The overall contribution of this thesis is to provide theoretical frameworks as well as empirical observations analysing the variables that contribute to the social construction of organizations deemed more or less compassionate and, in so doing, providing an empirically supported sociological definition of organizational compassion.